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LETTER

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE

EARL OF SELKIRK,

ON HIS

Settlement at the Red River,

NEAR

HUDSON'S BAY.

BIBLIOTHÈQUE
S.M.E.
1964
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BY JOHN STRACHAN, D. D.

RECTOR OF YORK, UPPER CANADA.

London:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME & BROWN;
W. BLACKWOOD, EDINBURGH; W. TURNBULL,
GLASGOW; A. BROWN & CO. AND
JAMES STRACHAN, ABERDEEN,
1816.

MONTREAL, (LOWER CANADA:)
RE-PRINTED BY W. GRAY.

B.-5

ADVERTISEMENT.

As soon as I heard that the Earl of Selkirk was commencing a Settlement on the Red River, I determined to warn the Public of the deception, and of the great misery which Emigrants must experience in such a distant and inhospitable region. But it was difficult to procure the necessary information; and before it could be obtained, the progress of the American war called my attention to distress nearer home.

It was not till last June that I was able to get a copy of his Lordship's Prospectus, a paper neatly drawn up, but, alas! destitute of truth.—To those who are amazed, after reading my remarks, at the promises and assertions which it contains, I am justified in saying, that promises still more remarkable, and assertions still more extravagant, were made by the Earl of Selkirk himself, at Stromness, in June 1813, to persons whom he was enticing to go out.

Few of these wretched men have any written agreement; an omission, I hope, not wilfully made, to prevent legal redress: for surely punishment ought to be inflicted on Speculators, who persuade Families, under false pretences, to leave their native homes.

Of the Settlers who went to the Red River, many died at Church-hill, in Hudson's Bay, from the severity of the climate, and the quality of their food. Others seriously injured their health; and not one of those who have escaped, saw a joyful day from the time they left Scotland, till they began their journey to Canada. The following Letter may prevent any more from encountering the miseries of the polar regions; and this is all I am able to effect. But retributive justice is due; and I flatter myself, that among the many great examples of disinterested benevolence so common in Great Britain, one may be found sufficiently powerful to compel Lord Selkirk, and his brother Proprietors, to make ample compensation to the Survivors, for the money and effects lost at Church-hill, and the miseries they have endured.

YORK, Upper Canada, October 5, 1815.

LETTER, &c.

MY LORD,

I READ, with some pleasure, many years ago, your Book on Emigration; and, although I could not subscribe to several dogmas of political economy, which you endeavoured in that work to establish, or be persuaded, from your reasoning, that a salutary check to emigration from the Highlands of Scotland, by means of interior improvement, was altogether hopeless, I was delighted to find a Scotch Peer writing with so much intelligence, and felicity of style. In the interesting account of your Settlement on Prince Edward's Island, the difficulties which emigrants have to surmount, before establishing themselves in a new country, are detailed with much truth, and perspicuity, and this forms a portion of your work, which may be still read with much advantage by those who are preparing to remove to America.

But the goodness of the style, and truth of delineation, could not secure the general plan of this settlement from my severest reprobation. Your Lordship makes a merit of bringing settlers from Scotland, and not from the United States, which those who are ignorant of the manner of establishing new settlements, and of selling uncultivated land, might be disposed to admit; but this merit vanished the moment I read the terms given to these unfortunate Settlers, which, though held up as generous, to the reader, were such as your Lordship well knows, native Americans never would accept.

The quantity of land assigned to each family, of 50, or even 100 acres, was too small. In a very few years, the farmer, if industrious, must have sold out, or purchased the adjacent

adjacent lands, at your own price. Had farms, even large farms, been given to the first settlers for nothing, and the means of cultivation for the first year, the advantage would have been yours. It is the settlers that give value to the surrounding soil. Nothing is more common in the United States, than for the proprietors of large tracts giving extensive farms gratis, to the few that first encounter the difficulty of settling.

Your people could not sit down with satisfaction on a purchase of 50 acres, when they saw their neighbours getting 200 from Government for nothing. Nor can I believe, that the best mode of encouraging an emigrant to clear land is bringing him in debt, before he has sufficient confidence in the ultimate success of his undertaking. Even the time allowed those of your settlers who had no superfluity of capital, of not paying for their farms till the third or fourth year was too short for persons unacquainted with the manner of clearing and cultivating waste lands. I am willing to believe that no advantage has been taken of this, but the knowledge of the fact must have been extremely discouraging to men who were never accustomed to be in debt, and cherished (as you say) high sentiments of independence.

These remarks are called forth by your Lordship's animadversions upon the great encouragement given by Government to the first settlers in this Province. I cannot agree with your Lordship, in supposing, that it was either unwise or pernicious to give them rations for one or two years after their farms had been allotted them. Consisting chiefly of refugees, they could not have subsisted without this assistance, and as it was they found much difficulty. The most convenient stations for placing them were at a great distance from the inhabited parts of Lower Canada; the communication was expensive and difficult, and none of the settlers had the means of purchasing provisions at Montreal, and bringing them to Upper Canada. The great expence of transportation, added to the prime cost, (at that time very high), placed them far beyond the reach of the most industrious settler. It may be freely admitted, that stimulants are very necessary, on many occasions, to rouse to active exertions, and to produce industrious habits; but the

Loyalists

Loyalists, who took refuge in this country from the rebellious provinces, required stimulants very different from those which your Lordship approves. At the end of a long war, soldiers have little money, and less credit, yet many had possessed confortable farms previous to the rebellion; and deserved every indulgence that Government could afford them. The King was made acquainted with their situation, and hastened to relieve them. He gave them lands, farming utensils, and provisions. His kindness was attended with the most beneficial effects; the loyalists were encouraged to persevere; the little produce they raised enabled them to procure some cattle before their rations were withdrawn; and the horrors of the wilderness began to disappear. Having constructed tolerable huts, surrounded with a field or two under cultivation, they began to be attached to their new possessions.

The conditions offered by your Lordship to settlers, in your second attempt at colonization, deserve greater censure than those already noticed. It is, indeed, impossible to behold with complacency a British Peer turning a land speculator, at a moment when his country was in imminent danger, and, instead of flying to her assistance, and disdaining to survive her fall, anticipating that melancholy event, by anxiously preparing an asylum in a distant corner of the earth.

For every settler brought into Upper Canada by your Lordship, you received 200 acres of land, of which you were bound to grant him 50, making a nett profit of 150 acres on each settler. This portion of 50 acres being too small for a farm, must, in a few years, be sold at a trifle, or the possessor compelled to purchase at any price, as soon as he was able, (if that could ever happen on so small a farm,) the adjoining lands. This is a way of accumulating property, not the most honorable to the Peerage, and attended with the most pernicious consequences to the colony, and its administration. Such settlers consider themselves dupes; they become discontented with their situation, and with the Government which permits such transactions. And it must be allowed, that it would be much better for the King to grant, at once, any quantity of land that he chooses, to a person whom he wished to serve, than to give it in this manner.

I am ready to acquit your Lordship of any profit, as yet,

in

in either of these speculations; grasping at too much, nothing has been obtained; and though marked with more than the precaution of an American land-jobber, they have been singularly unsuccessful.

Taking these things into consideration, I was disposed to pass over in silence your Lordships's land speculations in Prince Edward's Island, and in Upper Canada. You might have been deceived, and really supposed, that the conditions offered on both occasions were extremely liberal; but after the experience which they must have given you, and your visit to America, it will not be so easy to excuse you for offering worse conditions to emigrants, going to an infinitely worse situation, where they can only meet with disappointment and misery.

Your projected settlement at the Red River, or third attempt at colonization, appears to me, not only more extravagant than either of the former, but one of the most gross impositions that ever was attempted on the British public, and must be attended with the most baneful consequences to all those unfortunate men, who, deluded by the false promises held out to them, shall leave their homes for such a dreary wilderness.

To prove this, I have only to examine the assertions and encouragements in their order, as published in your Prospectus, to induce Subscribers and Settlers to come forward, —a task which I shall perform with all plainness, choosing rather to hazard, being thought dry and tedious, than to raise a suspicion of exaggeration, by using a declamatory, or even an embellished style.

The Prospectus for the Red River Settlement is as follows:—

"A tract of land, consisting of some millions of acres, and in point of soil and climate inferior to none of equal extent in British America, is now to be disposed of; and will be sold extremely cheap, on account of its situation, which is remote from the present settlements. If a tract of the same extent and fertility were offered for sale in Lower-Canada,

nada, or Nova Scotia, purchasers would be eager to obtain it at one hundred, perhaps two hundred thousand guineas; and at that price, would make an ample profit, in the course of some years, by retailing it, in small lots, at an advanced price, to actual settlers. The lands in question, no ways different in advantages, may be purchased for about £10,000 sterling."

In this portion of the Prospectus, I particularly call the reader's attention to the very slight manner of noticing the remoteness of the projected colony. A stranger would naturally suppose, that as Upper Canada is carefully omitted in comparing the lands of the Red River with the other colonies, they formed part of that extensive province, more especially since they are declared to be equal, in soil and climate, to any in British America. As respects the value of the land, situation is every thing. The most fruitful valley in the world is worth nothing, if surrounded with impassable mountains. The assertion, therefore, that these lands are no ways different in advantages from those of Lower Canada and Nova Scotia, is false, unless their situation be equally favourable.

The Proprietors may be ignorant, but you know, my Lord, that situation is the true criterion of the value of lands, and the principal cause of retarding, or accelerating their settlement. That a similar tract in the maritime colonies would sell at this sum may be freely admitted; for, if we suppose it to consist of four millions of acres, one hundred thousand guineas will be little more than sixpence per acre, and yet the lands on the Red River not be worth a farthing. The maritime colonies are getting populous. The wants of emigrants can be supplied by their neighbours at a reasonable expence, and the communication is easy and expeditious; but at the Red River, every thing is the reverse—no population, no comforts, no communication. If, indeed, this projected colony did possess as many advantages as those of Lower Canada or Nova Scotia, I agree with your Lordship, that the purchase money is exceedingly reasonable, and that the profits of the proprietors would be immense; but as it possesses no real advantages, it will be found sufficiently dear.

The Prospectus proceeds—"The title has been submitted to lawyers of the first eminence, in London, and is declared to be unexceptionable; but the situation is such, that the population of the older settlements cannot be expected, in the natural course of things, to spread into it for a long period of time; and, till that take place, the disadvantage of its remote situation must be an insuperable objection, in the eyes of any unconnected individual, who is looking out for lands to establish his family. Hence, the prospect of finding settlers to purchase the lands in small lots, is remote, and on this account the proprietors are willing to part with it for an inconsiderable price. But the obstacles, which, to an unconnected adventurer, may be justly deemed insurmountable, may be overcome, with ease, by the combined efforts of many; and an adequate sum of money judiciously expended in removing the first difficulties of an infant settlement, may place this tract of land in circumstances as advantageous to the proprietors, as if it were in the immediate vicinity of populous colonies."

This passage begins with declaring the title unexceptionable. The goodness of the title is the first thing to be considered by a purchaser of land: let us examine it.

1st. The tract said to be purchased from the Hudson's Bay Company by your Lordship, is supposed to embrace the West side of Lake Winipie, to extend from the 46th to the 52d degree of North latitude, and Westerly to the source of the water falling into that Lake. Your Lordship requires not to be informed, that the boundary line of the Hudson's Bay charter is fixed, by the treaty of Utrecht, at the 49th degree of North latitude. South of this line they cannot give the shadow of a title. Now, it appears, that the forks of the Red River are very near the Company's boundary line, and that several Emigrants have gone so far up the Southern branch as to be beyond the line pointed out by the treaty of Utrecht.

2dly. In the treaty with the United States of America, in 1783, which the late treaty confirms, the boundary is declared to be a line from the North West point of the Lake of the Woods, found to be 49° 37' North, running due West, till

till it meet the Mississippi. It has been discovered, that such a line can never meet that river, the most Northern branch of which arises in 47° 38' North latitude. There is consequently great risk, for we seem to give them every thing, till this difficulty be adjusted, of the greater part of the country designed for the settlement falling within the American territory. If the line between the British Colonies and the American States be drawn due West from the Lake of the Woods, as the Americans will, no doubt, insist on, notwithstanding its injustice, and their pertinacity may attain, then will all the farms of the Colony, from the forks of the Red River, comprising all they now cultivate, and, perhaps, all worth cultivation, be clearly within the American territories.—Should this happen, it is sufficiently evident, that this nation of land speculators will not allow your Lordship's claim. If it turn out otherwise, the King will not confirm your purchase, unless very badly advised, by giving you a good title. For, as it will afterwards appear, the settlement, if it ever prosper, must of necessity become an appendage to the United States, and, of course, hostile to Great Britain. The title is, therefore, so far from being secure, that it is exposed to the most serious objections.

3dly. Minor objections to the title may be discovered in the nature of the charter given by King Charles II. to the Governor and Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay. The charter was given under gross ignorance of the geographical situation of the country. It gives the right of soil, along the bays and waters, to the Governor and Company, but no right of transfer. Nor can it be implied from any of the clauses, that the Governor and Adventurers have any claim whatever to the country, so far into the interior as the proposed settlement is situated.—In fine, the charter, conferring these privileges, has never received any Parliamentary sanction, or confirmation. As to the opinion of lawyers, of the first eminence, declaring the title unexceptionable, it is here, as on many other occasions, of little weight, since other gentlemen, of the first legal character in England, have pronounced the charter illegal, and void. The Hudson's Bay Company thought this latter the more correct opinion; for, in 1802, when their commerce was infringed upon by rival traders, they very

wisely

wisely declined bringing the question to a decision in a court of justice.

After noticing the title, the Prospectus artfully assigns the remoteness of the situation as the cause of the cheapness of the purchase; but in doing this, it is observed, no doubt, for the encouragement of the settlers, "that the situation is such, that the population of the older settlements cannot be expected, in the natural course of things, to spread into it for a long period of time."

This language certainly implies that such a time will come, and it will not be very remote, otherwise no subscribers would have been found so foolish as to give their money for a contingent benefit, to happen a thousand years hence. Let us enquire into its probability.

The boundary line between the British Colonies and the United States of America, strikes the St. Laurence in the 45th degree of North latitude, and thence proceeds through the middle of the Lakes and Rivers, to Lake Huron. Thus far both sides are capable of cultivation; but, on entering Lake Huron the Northern bank is barren, and not habitable; it consists of immense rocks and mountains, with little or no wood, interspersed with lakes, and small rivers, and, from every account, totally unfit for cultivation. The Northern side of Lake Superior is similar, so that, in the extent of these two Lakes, or for more than eight hundred and fifty miles, there can be no settlement. Trading stations there may be, but Upper Canada, the nearest Colony, can never extend farther than to the North bank of Lake Huron, or to the extremity of its South East Bank. If to this we add the distance from Lake Superior to Lake Winipie, which appears, in a direct line, by the map, five hundred miles, we may very safely say, that no British colony will ever approach nearer than twelve or thirteen hundred miles.

The Prospectus continues—"The expence, however, would be too great for an individual, and it is, therefore, proposed to form a joint stock Company, in 200 shares, of £100 each, so as to raise a sum of £20,000, of which a moiety to be employed in the purchase of the lands in question

tion, the remainder in those expences which are necessary in bringing in settlers, and thereby rendering the land valuable."

The Governor and adventurers trading to Hudson's Bay may congratulate themselves on receiving £10,000 for a portion of their supposed territory, which, for the purpose of colonizing, is not worth so many farthings; but to suppose, as your Lordship seems to do in this paragraph, that any sum of money can remedy the disadvantages arising from a situation so remote, is exceedingly absurd. But, as I feel no concern for any loss which the proprietors may experience, and am anxious only for the settlers, I proceed with the Prospectus.

"To these settlers land will be disposed of, either in the way of sale, or lease in perpetuity, at the option of the settler, on terms very advantageous to him, and, at the same time, abundantly advantageous to the proprietors. As there are various objections against receiving into the proposed settlement, any Americans, of the description of those who are likely to offer themselves, the settlers must be emigrants from Europe; and the most feasible plan seems to be that they should be selected from those parts of the United Kingdom, which are most over-burthened with inhabitants, viz. the Highlands of Scotland, and some parts of Ireland. A small proportion of the emigrants who now go from these districts to the United States of America, would be more than sufficient for the object in view. Such a change in their destination could injure no part of the kingdom; and would save to the empire subjects who would, otherwise, be entirely lost to their country. To facilitate an object thus equally advantageous to the public, and to the parties concerned, it is proposed that a preference should be allowed to subscribers who are personally connected with these districts of the kingdom, and whose local influence may be of service in promoting the desired change in the destination of those who are determined to emigrate."

When we come to the consideration of the term offered to the settlers, we shall find them such as no Americans would accept. So far, therefore, the poor emigrants from Ireland

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and Scotland are under no particular obligation to your Lordship. But to turn the stream of emigration from the United States of America to the British Colonies, is confessedly an object of the greatest importance, and were this the effect of your Lordship's exertions, they could not be sufficiently praised. To preserve the subjects of Great Britain as loyal colonists, who find their situation disagreeable at home, and are determined to emigrate, must be the earnest wish of Government, and no proper means of bringing it about ought to be omitted. It appears, indeed, from measures lately taken, that the Ministry begin to be sensible of its importance, and it is to be hoped, that a total exclusion of American settlers will form part of their plan; for, unless this policy be adopted, and rigidly adhered to, this valuable colony cannot be long preserved to the British Crown.

The Americans should be considered aliens, as well as other nations, and declared incapable of holding landed property, or of having any share in the Government. The general defection of recent settlers from the United States of America during the late contest, shews this to be a measure of imperious necessity; for, while the great majority of the people exhibited a loyalty which has never been surpassed, the greater part of the American adventurers either deserted, or held back; and in some parts of the country where they were numerous, endangered the safety of loyal subjects, by their treacherous adherence to the enemy.

Convinced that your Lordship's intentions of establishing a colony of loyal subjects is perfectly sincere, and that you are too well acquainted with the depravity of the American character to desire any number of that people in your settlement, I am, nevertheless, persuaded, that so far from raising a colony of British subjects, whose principles and morals shall be free from the contamination of the United States, and prove a bulwark to their encroachments, you are exerting every nerve to tempt British subjects to leave their native homes and friends, to cross the seas, and to risk their lives, who must afterwards, from their situation, become American citizens, or be cut off from all practicable communication with the rest of the world. Perhaps your Lordship is not sufficiently aware of the great difficulty

which

which the projected settlement will have in communicating with Hudson's Bay, or with Canada, and the small distance that intervenes between the source of the Red River, and one of the branches of the Mississippi. These particulars we shall illustrate in the sequel.

The skill exhibited in selecting proprietors in districts where settlers may be found most easily, and in making use of them as recruiting serjeants, and giving them an interest in the success of the colony, proves your Lordship an able General, and had it been in a better cause, would have merited praise; but to tempt to ruin and misery deserves the severest punishment.

"The settlement," continues the prospectus, "is to be formed in a territory where religion is not the ground of any civil disqualification; an unreserved participation in every privilege will, therefore, be enjoyed by the Protestant and Catholic, without distinction; and it is proposed, that, in every parochial division, an allotment of lands shall be made, for the perpetual support of a clergyman, of that persuasion which the majority of the inhabitants adhere to."

So far this is praise-worthy; but, to render the system liberally complete, a similar allotment ought to be made for the instruction of youth, and a general one for the whole colony, for the purpose of internal improvement, making of roads, helping the navigation, &c.; nor ought the minority to be left destitute of religious instruction, when they are respectable for their numbers, in any parish. In a new settlement, persons of every denomination assemble, and it is frequently difficult to ascertain what persuasion predominates; but, as the greater number have joined themselves to some society of Christians before they emigrate, it is desirable to maintain a religious principle in their minds. It is, therefore, a matter of greater importance than may be at first supposed, to provide religious instruction for all the members of a rising colony, without encouraging the multiplicity of sects.

"As the lands in question," continues the Prospectus, "possess important natural advantages over any which

now

now remain unoccupied in Nova Scotia, and the adjacent colonies, it cannot be deemed unreasonable, if the settlers, in general, are charged for their lands at the lowest rate which they would pay in those provinces. On the other hand, they will naturally expect to be conveyed to their lands, without incurring more expence than if they were to settle in these maritime colonies. The managers of the concern must, therefore, undertake to provide conveyance, at moderate rates, for the emigrants who go out under their patronage. The rate of passage money paid on board other ships bound to America, may be taken as the criterion.—These rates being always proportioned to the prices of freight and shipping at the time, no material loss can be apprehended upon the sea voyage.

"But, as the place of settlement is at a considerable distance from the sea, an extra expence must be incurred for the inland conveyance, which the emigrants cannot be expected to pay, if they are to be charged for land at the rate of the maritime colonies. The expence which will thus fall upon the proprietors may be estimated at £10 sterling for each family of settlers, at an average. This, however, will be amply reimbursed in the price of their land."

It is not easy to discover, in the former part of the Prospectus, any thing to justify the gratuitous assertion with which this paragraph commences As to Nova Scotia, I cannot speak from personal knowledge; but, in Lower and Upper Canada, as good lands remain to be granted, within half a day's journey, (in many places within a mile) of navigable streams and lakes, as any that have been given away. To say, therefore, that the lands on the Red River possess important natural advantages over any which now remain unoccupied in Nova Scotia, and the adjacent colonies, is to deceive, unless it can be proved, that a tract of land, far from protection, and surrounded by hostile Indians, is more valuable than richer land, in the midst of wealthy settlements.

It is well known, that the inhabited part of Upper Canada consists of a very narrow strip, along the banks of the St. Laurence, and the Lakes, extending, in many places, not

not more than twelve miles back, and that, in this settled portion, the Government still retains one-seventh, which may be given to good settlers, and, at this very time is actually granting to emigrants from the United Kingdom. In truth, the lands to be granted are more eligible, all things considered, than those which were bestowed on the Loyalists at the commencement of the settlement in Upper Canada. The new settler has not now, as he had then, to travel two or three hundred miles for his supplies; the old settlements, within a few hours walk, can furnish him with all he wants. The southern townships of Lower Canada, now granting to emigrants, are equal, perhaps superior, in point of soil, to any other part of this province.

"The Red River," says Sir Alex. M'Kenzie, vol. i. page 59, intro, "runs in a Southern direction to near the head-waters of the Mississippi. The country, on either side, is but partially supplied with wood, and consists of plains, covered with Buffalo and Elk, especially on the Western side. On the Eastern side are lakes and rivers, and the whole country is well wooded, level, abounding in Beaver, Bears, Mouse Deer, Fallow Deer, &c. The natives, who are of the Algonquin tribe, are not very numerous, and are considered as the natives of Lake Superior. This country being near the Mississippi, is also inhabited by the Nadowasis, who are the natural enemies of the former, the head of the water being the war line. They are in a continual state of hostility, and, although the Algonquins are equally brave, the others generally out-number them. It is very probable, therefore, that if the latter continue to venture out of the woods, which form their only protection, they will soon be extirpated. There is not, perhaps, a finer country in the world, for the residence of uncivilized man, than that which occupies the space between this river and Lake Superior. It abounds in every thing necessary for the wants and comforts of such a people. Fish, venison, and fowl, with wild rice, are in great plenty; while at the same time, their subsistence requires that bodily exercise, so necessary to health and vigour."

I quote the whole of this passage, although greater part of the eulogy, with which it concludes, belongs to that part

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of the country which must fall within the territories of the United States, that I may not be accused of partiality.—Sir Alexander praises it only as a fine residence for uncivilized man, and the very circumstances which render it valuable to them, detract from its value as a civilized colony. At all events, the soil of the best parts (independent of the bad situation) is not equal to that of millions of acres granting by the Government, in the Canadas for nothing.

The expence of bringing out emigrrnts will average, your Lordship says, £10 for each family; this will be found, by the rest of the proprietors sufficiently low; but were the settlement to succeed, theycould well afford four times the sum.*

"The lowest price of land," says the Prospectus, "in the maritime colonies, when sold to actual settlers, and possessing any tolerable advantages of situation, is at the rate of 10s. per acre, if sold; or if leased for a perpetuity, 1s. per annum Every family of settlers may be expected to take up at least 100 acres, if they are allowed some accommodation of time for the payment: and 100 acres; at the above rate, will amount to £50, leaving a nett advantage of £40, after reimbursing the charge of bringing in the settler. If he should prefer leasing, his rent will, in two years. repay the charges, and will remain afterwards as a clear income to the proprietors."

Your Lordship must have been very badly informed of the price of land in the maritime colonies, (which, no doubt, include the Canadas,) when you state the lowest rate at 10s per acre. You may purchase thousands of acres at 2s. 6d. The writer of these remarks was urged to purchase, about 18 months ago, 1200 acres of land, in a very good situation for L. 100, or 1s. 8d. per acre, and, after keeping it a year, offered it back for the same money, and interest, which was declined. As to leases for perpetuity, they are never heard of. Who would think of giving nearly as much for rent, as might purchase the fee-simple?

To

* It appears, that, instead of Ten Pounds for each family, Ten Guineas are paid for Man, Woman, and Child, which makes an immense difference to the settler.—*See Postscript.*

To charge L. 50 for every hundred acres, in a place so remote, is to pillage the unfortunate emigrant; for, if he had found his way to Canada, he would have received 200 acres for nothing, or, at most, L. 9. the price of survey; and, instead of being cut off from all the world, he would have been in a good neighbourhood, and near a good market for his produce In this Province, farms are frequently purchased, with improvements, for two dollars per acre; that is, from 10 to 30 acres clear, with a small log house. In the midst of rich settlements, and in favourable situations, the price is greater, sometimes ten dollars per acre; but the average price of land through the whole province does not exceed one dollar.

Any industrious person coming to the Canadas, with the means of paying his passage, and £50 or £100 in his pocket, will soon acquire a good farm; and if he come without any capital, the savings on his wages will, in two years, purchase an uncultivated farm; or if he receive a grant from the Crown, which he may always do, he can purchase cattle to stock it.

The Prospectus proceeds to mention the produce that may be raised, with advantage, on the banks of the Red River.

"As the inland situation of the settlement will preclude the settler from some of the sources of profit which are enjoyed in maritime situations, it becomes necessary to provide substitutes. The cultivation of hemp is peculiarly calculated for inland situations, as that article is so valuable in proportion to its weight, that it can bear the expence of a considerable inland navigation. This cultivation is also a favorite national object, and the settlement will derive benefit from the public encouragement which is held out for promoting it."

"A still more beneficial object of attention is the growth of fine wool, an article so valuable, that it could bear any expence of inland conveyance, and one for which the country is peculiarly adapted. In the vicinity of the proposed settlement, there are immense open plains, without wood, fine dry grass land, much of it capable of immediate culti-

vation,

vation, and all well fitted for pasturage, particularly for sheep. This is an advantage which no other part of British America possesses by nature, and to which the colonists of the maritime provinces cannot attain, without the laborious and expensive operation of clearing. If to this advantage the proprietors add that of a good breed of Spanish Merino sheep, the settlers can never meet with any difficulty in paying the price or rent of the lands. The fleeces of ten or twelve sheep will pay the rent of 100 acres, and with the produce of a very small stock, the price of a lot of land may be paid off in three or four years."

Before we can form a correct opinion of the value of these productions, it is necessary to examine the communications between the Red River and the sea.

These communications are three:—

I. By Hudson's Bay.

II. By Canada.

III. By the Mississippi.

I. By Hudson's Bay.

York Factory, from which the boats for the interior take their departure, is situated in lat. 57° 1' North, longitude 92° 36' West.

		Miles
Hayes's River.	About 8 miles of this river the boats may be carried up by the tide; the rest of the distance is a strong current, which requires them to be towed	52
Steel River	Must be towed up	27
Hill River to the first Fall.	Here the navigation, for boats becomes inconvenient, (though they may proceed with difficulty) and canoes are commonly used.....	32
	Carried forward.....	111

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		Miles.
	Brought forward.....	111
To the Head of Hill River.	In this distance there is a series of shoals, strong rapids, innumerable sunken rocks, twelve portages, and many discharges.....	30
Swampy Lake.	.....	7
Jack Tent River.	Many rapids, and five carring places	10
Knee Lake	.....	47
Trout River.	Many rapids, & two carrying places	13
Holy Lake.	.....	30
Rivulets & small Lakes.	Five carrying places	50
Eachawaymamus Brook	In dry seasons no water runs in this brook. There are ten beaver dams kept in repair; and in dry seasons the canoes must wait the brook filling up. At the foot of the dam it is frequently as dry as a barn floor....	28
Hair Lake	This discharges into the Saskatchawan.....	7
Saskatchawan.	One carring place	35
Play Green Lake.	.....	14
Lake Winipie.	By the east side, which is much the shortest	300
Red River to the Forks.....		43
Pembino Brook.....		90
		815

The distance from York factory to the settlement appears to be eight hundred and fifteen miles; but as the greater number of the settlers stopped near the Forks, at which the Government House was built, we must subtract ninety miles, which leaves seven hundred and ten miles, interrupted with twenty-five carrying places, besides many other impediments. As you proceed up the river from the Forks to Pembino Brook, the climate becomes much milder, and the soil more favorable.

On this route the rivers and lakes begin to break up in the latter end of May; but they are not sufficiently clear of ice

ice to admit of a safe navigation, till the middle of June; nor can a boat or canoe leave York factory for the Red River, later than the 6th of September. The settler can, therefore, depend only upon eighty-three days in the year for transacting the commercial business of the colony by Hudson's Bay. In the distance between York Factory and Lake Winipic, boats can navigate only one hundred and twelve miles, with advantage. From the entrance of the Lakes to the Forks of the Red River, boats are preferable to canoes. Through the whole distance from the sea to the settlement, the crew of a boat or canoe will rarely be able t find five days provisions, and must support themselves with what they have laid in store. During winter, when travelling on the ice and snow, things are still worse. Through all the distance, the country is extremely forbidding, being little more than one vast range of rocks, swamps, and morasses. Should any misfortune happen to the boat or canoe, the crew must inevitably perish.

It is proper to remark, that some little variety, according to the seasons, may take place in the portages and rapids. Some years the waters are much higher than others. This season, Lake Ontario has been three feet higher than it has been known for twenty years. The same has happened to all the Lakes. But I have endeavored, from the best information I could obtain, to ascertain the average, and on it only can the settlers depend.

II. *The Communication to the Red River Settlement by* Canada.

The distance from Montreal to Red River is upwards of two thousand miles From that city to Fort William, on Lake Superior, the principal post of the North-West Company, there are two routes: one by the St. Lawrence, Lake Ontario, Erie, St. Clair, Huron, [illegible] Superior. These Lakes are navigated by vessels of from 20 to 200 tons burthen. The St. Lawrence, and part of the straight between Lakes Ontario and Erie, by bye-boats There is also a portage of ten miles to pass the Falls of Niagara. It is now in contemplation to pass immediately from Lake Ontario into

into Lake Huron, by which a tedious navigation of more than three hundred miles will be cut off.

The second route from Montreal to Fort William is by the Ottawa River. This stream can be navigated by canoes only; and before you reach Lake Huron, there are thirty-one carrying places, some of them exceeding a mile in length. Over these the canoes are carried on men's shoulders, and the goods on their backs, as they are by the route from York Factory. The river Ottawa cannot be navigated by any other craft than bark canoes. They are commonly of the largest size, carrying about four tons, and requiring nine men to navigate them—that is the crew of a vessel of two hundred tons. After reaching Lake Huron, the two routes join to Fort William.

At this place you leave Lake Superior, and pass up a small brook in order to go to the Red River. Before you reach the Lake of the Woods, there are twenty-five carrying places to surmount, exceeding, in all, twenty-two miles, besides several very short ones. Between the Lake of the Woods and Lake Winipie there are eighteen more, some a mile in length. The navigation of the river Winipie is very dangerous; but as there is no other route from Lake Superior to the Red River, it must be encountered. From Fort William to Lake Winipie small canoes are used, hardly containing two-fifths of these used in passing up the Ottawa, on account of the shallowness of the waters, and the badness of the rapids. But the difficulties of this route will be felt more forcibly, from the detail extracted from Sir Alexander Mackenzie's voyages.

A TABLE

Of the distance from Fort William on Lake Superior, about thirteen hundred miles from Montreal, & two thousand from the sea, to your Lordship's Colony on the Red River.

	Miles.
To Partridge Portage	2
This portage 600 paces long.	
To the Prairie, or Meadow	3
The half of the load to be carried 3½ miles.	
To the Carrebouef Portage	3½
This portage 680 paces long.	
To the Outard Portage	3
This portage 2400 paces long.	
To the Elk Portage	6
This portage 1200 paces long	
To the Portage De Cerire	4
To the second Portage De Cerire	0¾
This Portage 410 paces long	
To the last Portage De Cerire	0½
This Portage 380 paces long.	
To the end of the Mountain Lake	6
This Portage 626 paces long.	
To the next Portage	2½
This Portage only a few paces.	
To the New Grande Portage	0½
This Portage 3100 paces long.	
To Martin Portage	5
This Portage only 20 paces long.	
To Perch Portage, through a mud-pond	0½
This Portage 480 paces long.	
To the head of Pigeon River	3
This Portage 679 paces long.	
To the Escalier Portage	7½
This Portage 55 paces long.	
To the Cheval Du Bois	2½
This Portage 380 paces long.	
Carried forward	49½

	Miles.
Brought forward,	4½
To the Portage Des Gros Pins,	¼
This portage 640 paces long	
To the end of Marabœuf Lake, or Rock Logenaga,	14½
This portage 55 paces long.	
To Le Roche	14
This portage 43 paces long.	
To Prairie Portage,	1
This portage 611 paces long.	
To the little Portage De Coteaux	5
This portage 165 paces long.	
To the end of the Lake de Coteaux	17
Two portages, 15 and 190 paces long.	
To the Portage De Carpes	1
This portage 390 paces long	
To the portage of Lac Bois Blanc	5
This portage 180 paces long.	
To the end of Lac Bois Blanc	15
This portage 200 paces long.	
To the Portage Des Pins	1
This portage 400 paces long.	
To the Pont Du Bois	2
This portage 280 paces long.	
To La Croche	1
This portage 80 paces long	
To Portage De Rideau	18
This portage 400 paces long.	
To Huron Portage	3
This portage 400 paces long.	
To the Portage Du Croix	34
This portage 600 paces long.	
To the next Portage	0½
This portage 40 paces long.	
To Vermillion Lake	4
To the Nouvelle Portage	22
This portage 180 paces long	
To the second Nouvelle Portage, about	1
This portage 320 paces long.	
To the Chaudiere Portage	2½
To the Lac De Pluie	3½
Carried forward,	215½

	Miles.
Brought forward,	
To the end of the Lake	39
To the Chaudiere	2
This portage 320 paces long.	
To Lac Du Bois	20
To River Winipie	75
This portage 50 paces long.	
To the Dalles	8
To the Grand Discharge	25½
Here is a very long portage.	
To the Little Discharge	1½
To Terre Jeune Portage	2½
To Terre Blanche	2½
To Portage De L'Isle	2½
To Jacob's Falls	20
A portage, the falls 15 feet high.	
The Woody Point	6½
A portage.	
To Rocky Portage	2
To Chute a L'Esclave	2
This portage long.	
To the Barrier	6½
To the Grand Rapid	10
To the White River	12
Seven portages all in sight.	
To the Lake De Bonnet	15
To Pennawas	4
To the Gulet Du Lac Du Bonnet	2
To the Gulet Du Bonnet	1½
To the Portage Du Bonnet	3
This portage nearly 1½ miles long.	
To Terre Blanche	2
Two portages.	
To Des Eaun qui Remuint	3
A portage.	
To second Des Eaun, &c. only a few yards	3½
A portage.	
To third, &c.	1½
A portage.	
To Provision House	2½
Carried forward,	557

	Miles.
Brought forward,	557
To Lake Winipie	4½
To the Red River	40
To the Forks.....	43
	644½

Note.—The length of the portages or carrying places is not always marked in Sir Alexander Mackenzie's Voyage; I have put down those that are. Gentlemen passing and repassing by this route, mention twenty five carrying places to the Lake of the Woods, and eighteen more to Lake Winipie. When I remarked that this did not correspond exactly with Sir Alexander's account, they replied, that his number was greater, as he noticed some short ones that they omitted.

The third Route to Red River is by the MISSISSIPPI.

From the Settlement, at the Forks of Red River,

To Pembino	90
To the Otter-Tail Lake Portage	200
This portage ½ a mile.	
To the end of Otter-Tail Lake.....	10
Here a portage of nearly 1½ miles.	
A small Lake .	
To another Lake.....	4
Which discharges into the Leaf River, the length of which is	90
To the end of the River De Corbeau.....	60
To the Falls of St. Anthony	300

After this there is no impediment to the navigation in this direction. Indeed the Otter-Tail may be properly considered the head of the Mississippi, from which there is only one portage, till you reach the falls of St. Anthony. Large boats can pass up the Red River as high as the Portage to Otter-Tail Lake. To the east of the Red River the plains are passable for waggons, and the distance from Pembino to the Falls of St Anthony, not more than three hundred miles. Cattle and produce of different kinds might be taken by land along this route, as it is much shorter than by water.

That this must be the outlet to the colony, were the impediments greater than we have any reason to believe them to be, is the opinion of all the intelligent persons whom I have conversed with from that country, and is sufficiently evident from the slightest examination of the other two. The American settlements up the Mississippi will at length approach the projected settlement on the Red River; and the application of steam to the purposes of navigation in that river, will give value to lands which were supposed of no use, on account of their great distance from the sea, and consequently from any market.

Your Lordship cannot conceal the utter impossibility of raising any bulky commodities for exportation to advantage (such as grain, beef, pork, &c.) and your list is confined to two, as at all likely to succeed.

1. *Hemp.*—Of this article it may be sufficient to remark, that it cannot be raised profitably even in the Canadas, although a premium has been offered by the legislature. Labour is still too dear, and mills, with other facilities for making up the raw material, too scarce, to enable the cultivator to sell at a reasonable price.

These impediments will no doubt vanish, as the population increases in the Canadas; but the interior situation of Red River adding an immense inland carriage to common difficulties, renders the raising of hemp, with any prospect of advantage, utterly impossible. The transport of hemp from the Red River to Montreal, would cost 1s per pound, or £112 per ton. Add the freight from Montreal to London, and a very reasonable remuneration to the farmer, and it could not be offered in the British market at less than £160 per ton. It may be purchased from Russia at £86, or nearly half the price.

To bring it by Hudson's Bay might not, perhaps, be quite so expensive; but the difference could not be great, as it is the carriage in boats and canoes that raises it so high; for after you get upon the great Lakes of Canada, where vessels of burthen are used, the transport is moderate. Besides, the season for passing and repassing to York Factory

is

is so short, as to render the carriage of any bulky article (or a large quantity of any thing) totally impracticable. You have little more than two months for travelling, a period hardly sufficient for one voyage. Rafts cannot be made here as on the St Lawrence, to carry at once the produce of many farms, the rivers are so small, and carrying places so numerous.

Wool—Your Lordship contends that this article may be raised to great advantage. In 1811, the staplers paid only 2s. a pound for the best English wool. Spanish, of the best quality, sold for 5s. or 6s. The former would not, therefore, pay cost and charges; but Merinoes from Spain might produce wool that might bear the cost of transportation, and still yield a profit, if the soil and climate prove favourable. The facilities for sheep (your Lordship says) are very great, particularly the large plains, covered with grass and totally clear of woods, on which immense flocks may be daily fed. —The advantages of these plains for sheep walks may be justly questioned. The grass is extremely coarse, the bottom not close and foggy like English pastures: it will tend, therefore, in all probability, to alter the natural qualities of the sheep. Such plains are frequently unhealthy, and the wolves are innumerable. In Spain, the fineness of the wool depends upon the variation of climate which the Merinoes enjoy in going from one part of the kingdom to the other, as the seasons change; nor is it probable, that a climate infinitely more severe, and coarser food, without the advantage of changing, will make no alteration in the fleece of those valuable animals. But let us suppose that the wool grows in full perfection, it is the only article which your colonists can raise with any prospect of advantage. How slender any hopes founded upon this solitary production must be, will appear evident from the bare inspection of the routes by York Factory and Canada. Is it not clear, my Lord, that they cannot be used even for transporting valuable articles in great quantities, unless it were practicable to settle them through the whole extent, which we have shewn to be impossible? The number of men required for the small boats and canoes, the smallness of their burden; a considerable part of which must be taken up with provisions necessary for the voyage, are impediments which time and enterprise cannot remedy.

The same difficulties attend the transport of necessaries for the colony. All that the inhabitants require from England must be so enhanced in value, as to force them, in a few years, to pay more than would have purchased the same articles and a comfortable farm to boot, in the maritime colonies.

The same difficulties will not be experienced in the route by the Mississippi. The Red River is navigable to the Otter-Tail Lake by boats; and in this direction there is nothing to be apprehended from the climate, or from the want of provisions. The traveller may find game in abundance, and the weather becomes milder as he advances. The portage to the Mississippi, or Otter-Tail, is short, and craft may be constructed at a small distance from its source, capable of carrying a large quantity of produce. Whether hemp would bear the expence of transportation even in this direction, may be reasonably doubted; but that this will be preferred as the outlet to the colony, if it be not abandoned, admits of no question.

I know, my Lord, that the settlers have been told, that they would find a market for any provisions they might raise, on the spot, from the the traders belonging to the Hudson's Bay and Canada Companies; but you must be aware, that a very few good farms will supply all that can be wanted. Besides, the traders can make their own price: for, if the settlers do not take what they chuse to give, they will be told to keep their produce, as they can do as well without it now as heretofore. Indeed the fur trade from Canada especially, can only be supported by great enterprise, and the savings on outfits. The traders and canoe-men are accustomed to depend entirely upon their own exertions, and in many places live altogether upon fish. Were these traders obliged to carry provisions for their people into the interior, the return of Furs which they could procure would defray the expense.

Behold, then, my Lord, the true situation of your colony. If it succeed, it must ultimately belong to the Americans. And such an advanced colony will be of infinite advantage to the United States, by separating their people from the

Indians

Indians, and proving a sort of barrier or line of protection. If your colonists quarrel with the Indians and are massacred, (a melancholy occurrence very probable) the loss will not be sustained by the United States, but by England. The Indians, learning the vices of the whites, will diminish in numbers and cease to be formidable, by the time that they have cut off two or three races of emigrantss. Then, when more emigrants are afraid to trust themselves, and the few that may have survived are reduced to despair, the American population will come forward and establish a settlement without trouble or expence.

The Prospectus proceeds ;—"With such advantages the settlers must thrive rapidly, and it will soon become apparent to them that the land is worth a much higher price. At first, however, it cannot be supposed that the common emigrant will understand or become capable of appreciating their advantages. On the contrary, it is to be expected that they will be diffident, and afraid of venturing to a new and (to them) an unknown country : it will therefore be necessary to give some extraordinary encouragement to a few of the first who enter into the plan."

I have failed, my Lord, in communicating my own impressions, if, after reading the preceding remarks on the Prospectus, any disinterested person shall consider the settlers to possess such advantages as the Prospectus promises. The observation, therefore, with which this passage begins, might be considered ironical and excite a smile, were not the subject too serious.

It is too much, my Lord, to bring families from their native homes, many of which were no doubt comfortable, to a wilderness, far from their friends and relatives, where they have to learn new habits, to suffer the greatest privations, and make sacrifices revolting to all their feelings, and after all have no prospect before them but misery and want—and then talk of their advantages !

It is, indeed, well said, that they will not understand or appreciate these advantages : for, had your Lordship visited this country in person, and its avenues of communication,

tion, as you ought to have done, before a settlement under your patronage was attempted, you would have found as great difficulty in discovering them as the settlers will do.—In speaking of the soil and climate, I confine myself to the South branch of the Red River, because it is every way more favourable: but the tract of land between it and the North branch, or Assiniboin, is almost one continued plain.—"The soil is sand and gravel, with a slight intermixture of earth, and produces a short grass. Trees are very rare; nor are there on the banks of the river sufficient, except in particular spots, to build houses and supply firewood for the trading establishments, of which there are four principal ones. Both these rivers are navigable for canoes to their source without a fall, though in some parts there are rapids, caused by occasional beds of limestone and gravel; but, in general, they have a sandy bottom." [*Sir Alexander Mackenzie's Voyage.*

The Prospectus thus concludes :—" From this and other causes, the commencement of the undertaking must be subject to expences, which will not continue permanently when the settlement is well established ; but it is only by means of this first outlay that we can expect to attain the ultimate advantages which are to accrue to the proprietors. There is no room to believe that these expences will exceed the sum which is proposed to be raised ; but it must be some time before the settlers can be numerous enough to pay much, either of rent or of purchase money. Ten or twelve years, therefore, must elapse, before the profits of the undertaking can be sufficient to afford a dividend to the proprietors. After that period, the returns may be expected to increase rapidly, and will soon form an ample indemnification to the subscribers for the loss of interest on their money in the mean time. The amount to which the profits may ultimately arise, seems almost to baffle imagination upon any principle of calculation which can reasonably be adopted ; the result comes out so extraordinary great, that it might appear like exaggeration to state it. But the difference between buying land at 1d. or 2d. per acre, and selling it at 8s. or 10s is very palpable, and does not seem to require much comment. The speculation may not suit those who require an immediate income ; but for any one who is desirous of providing

beforehand

beforehand for a young family, such an opportunity seldom occurs."

These flattering promises to the proprietors are not more likely to be fulfilled than those made to actual settlers. But for them I feel no concern. Their money will be expended, and then, perhaps, they will discover, that they have been made the tools of a commercial company.—But were these promises to be realized which the Prospectus intimates, your Lordship ought to have been satisfied with a more moderate profit, and instead of £50, given your lands for £20, or even less, to actual settlers; £10 to transport each family to the proposed settlement, and £10 to the proprietor; or, if the settler chuse rather a lease in perpetuity, which is not likely, then 1d. per acre instead of 1s. would have been amply sufficient; for surely a rent equal to the price in fee-simple must have satisfied the most rapacious subscriber.

Having gone through the Prospectus, let us pause for a moment, and look at the result.—We have shewn,

That the title is insecure;

That the settlement can receive neither protection nor assistance from the British colonies;

That the communications by Canada and Hudson's Bay are impracticable for the purposes of commerce;

That there is no market for grain or provisions of any sort;

That only one article, viz wool, can be pointed out capable of paying transport;

That this article may not succeed, on account of the wolves, the soil, and climate;

That the difficulty of communication will prevent the colonists from receiving any supplies unless at an enormous expence;

That the price of the land to settlers is a shameful imposition, and supported by statements that are false;

That the foundation for serious contention is laid in not having satisfied the claims of the natives before the settlement was attempted;

That there is the strongest probability that the first colonists will be massacred by the Indians;

That all the promises urged in the Prospectus to leave Great Britain, are false or delusive;

That

That the Colony, if it succeed, must, of necessity, from its frontier, become dependent on the United States, and, at length, an American colony;

That to encourage emigration to the Red River, is to sacrifice the superfluous population of Great Britain, and to injure her American colonies.

It appears very probable to me, my Lord, that the British Government will turn its attention to your projected settlement. To lose subjects in the present state of the world is to lose power, and consequently every attempt at colonization should be considered a national concern. It may not be wise to prevent emigration, but it is surely the interest of Government to take care that good subjects do not become useless, or altogether cut off from the body politic.

Colonies are commonly planted for the purpose of increasing the shipping and commerce, and consequently the resources of the mother country. But none of these advantages can ever be expected from your settlement. It yields no commodities for exportation. Two only are to be attempted —one must fail; the success of the other is extremely doubtful; nor is it of sufficient importance to expose respectable families to misery, even if it should succeed.

It is impossible for the Government to stand neuter upon this occasion when once properly informed, as there will not only be a great waste of valuable lives in effecting the settlement, and infinite misery, but, likewise, a very great loss of means, which might have been employed to the greatest advantage.

1. The proprietors expend - - -	£20,000
As they are most artfully selected from different parts of the United Kingdom, many may be induced through their influence to emigrate.	
Suppose the number, if not checked, to be 10 000 families, possessing, each, £50,	£500,000

And all this to establish a colony of no use to Great Britain, if successful; but, on the contrary, increasing the strength of an invidious foe. It is, however, more than probable,

probable, that very few of this number will be found alive at the end of seven years to tell their tale of woe.

An Indian, for the most trifling offence, may set fire to their harvests; and as the settlers occupy favorite hunting grounds, they cannot always avoid contention The loss of a single harvest must be attended with the most dreadful consequences. There are no settlements within reach from which to procure provisions. Should, therefore, such a disaster happen, the settlers would be forced to go to the grass plains to hunt the buffaloe for subsistence. But as the Indians are very tenacious of their rights as sovereigns of the soil, they would be compelled to hunt in great numbers, leaving their helpless families in the meantime exposed for many days to the insults and revenge of their new enemies. Should the surrounding Indians become generally hostile, there is no escape from the Red River, even for a populous colony. The navigation is so intricate, and attended with so many difficulties, that a few resolute men could stop and destroy the greatest numbers.

Such is the lamentable situation of your colony, my Lord, that even the frolic of a drunken Indian, in setting fire to the harvest, may prove its ruin;—and it is notorious, that the Savages, when hungry, will kill oxen, cows, and sheep, for a single meal, leaving the remainder of the carcase without regret. Every person, therefore, going to this settlement, is a total loss to the nation, for which no compensation directly or indirectly is received.

Were the same number of families with the same means transported to the Canadas, where there is ample room and a fertile soil, by the time that they would be all murdered at the Red River, they would have nearly doubled their numbers in Canada; have brought 400,000 acres, under cultivation, and been able to furnish, in the course of ten years, one million bushels of wheat for exportation; or several millions of staves; or as many masts, yards, and bowsprits, as the British navy requires; or some hundred tons of hemp; for this article may be raised whenever mills and other facilities are established, and the population sufficiently great to render labour moderate.

The

The interference of Government will very soon be necessary, on account of the animosity which already exists in the country near the Red River, between the fur traders from Canada and those from the Hudson's Bay. This animosity is extending to the few settlers that have already arrived, and unless speedily checked, must soon produce melancholy events. The settlers being more immediately connected with the company from Hudson's Bay, consider themselves parties to its monopoly, and the opponents of the Canada merchants This is natural enough; but as it will engender serious contentions in a place so remote without the shadow of law or justice, it requires the speedy consideration of his Majesty's Government.

And now, my Lord, allow me to ask how you could promise so many advantages to settlers on the Red River? No man leaves his native country but with the view of bettering his situation. The difficulties are great when every effort is made in favor of the emigrants. They are particularly exposed, from the very nature of their employment, to the diseases of the country in which they settle, by which many of those advanced in life are sure to be cut off, and some of the youth greatly debilitated. Indeed so many discomforts, disappointments, and painful recollections, crowd upon them, that nothing less than the prospect of an independence, such as he never could obtain in his native land, can possibly support him.

But to speak to your settlers of such an independence would be to trifle with their misery.—Without any market for their produce—any security of title—any expectation of ever becoming comfortable—deprived of the civil advantages possessed by all he British colonies—of the protection of the laws—the consolation of religion, and instruction to their children; they have nothing to compensate these sacrifices and privations but false promises, which they know the moment after they arrive, can never be realized!

Before concluding this letter, I would offer a very short advice to those of my countrymen in Great Britain and Ireland who are thinking of leaving their native country for America.

1.—I would strenuously advise those who can live comfortably, to remain where they are; for the greatest success will not be an equivalent for the miseries they must suffer before this success is realized Even then they will be dissatisfied, and they will look back with regret on the comforts they have left.

2.—I would even advise such as are able to rub along and preserve their independence, to remain at home.

3.—To such as are determined to emigrate, I present, for their inspection, the encouragement offered by Government, should they come to the Canadas, contrasted with the conditions offered by your Lordship to such as emigrate to the Red River.

The British Government gives to those emigrants who come out under their protection to the Canadas,

One or two hundred acres of excellent land—for nothing;
Farming utensils—for nothing;
Provisions for one year—for nothing;
They are under the protection of the laws, and enjoy all the privileges of British subjects;
They have access to religious instruction,
The means of educating their children,
The best medical aid;
They are in no danger from the Indians;
They have a good market for their produce;
Their supplies of cloathing and other necessaries can be obtained at a moderate expence.
If they shall prefer going to the Red River, your Lordship gives them——

One hundred acres of land—for L. 50;
Farming utensils—for their full value;
Provisions—for their full value;
The settlers are at the mercy of agents;
They are not under the protection of law;
Have no access to religious instruction;
In continual dread from the Indians;
No market for their produce;
Their supplies dear!!!—&c. &c.

It

It appears from this statement, that your settlers must either possess a considerable sum of money, or get deeply into your Lordship's debt. The price of his lands, his farming utensils, his provisions for the first and perhaps the second year, must embarrass him greatly, and palsy his future exertions.

Let those of my fellow-subjects who are determined to brave a foreign climate in quest of an independency, for the sake of their children, proceed to the Canadas, under the protection of the Government, and avoid land-jobbers as their greatest enemies. In these colonies they will have fewer difficulties to combat, and fairer prospects to support them; and they will have the pleasure of feeling that they are still Britons.

Every thing that is possible will be done for their accommodation. But they must not be too sanguine: for after every thing is done, they will require the exertion of the most persevering industry, and the firmest resolution, to realize their wishes, and to support them under the many difficulties that cannot be removed.

Had your Lordship been less interested in the colony on the Red River, I should not have presumed to trouble you with this letter; but feeling as I do the great wretchedness which the settlers must experience, I hasten to give them an opportunity of judging for themselves. And, shall I not avow it? I hasten to counteract the influence which your Lordship has so skilfully exerted in promoting this favourite object —If any persons are so foolish as to attend to your promises after reading the particulars that are now stated, they will have none to blame but themselves for the misery they must suffer on the Red River.

I am, my Lord,
Your obedient servant,

JOHN STRACHAN.

POSTSCRIPT.

POSTSCRIPT.

THIS letter had been some time finished, my Lord, when the news of the breaking up of your settlement arrived :—an event that appears to have been accelerated by the quarrels of your agents with the Canada fur-merchants: quarrels which proceeded even to open hostilities, in which blood has been spilt. These violent proceedings are too serious to be passed over, and will come under the cognizance of a court of justice; I therefore decline the recital of any of them here.

Having no particular concern with the rival companies, I have considered the colony without any reference to either; and if it really possess the advantages set forth in the Prospectus, the disaster that has happened will be transitory.

Finding some of the settlers at York, who had been brought down by the north-west traders, I was anxious to obtain from them some account of the settlement. I procured the following documents, which I subjoin without comment.—— They will be found strongly corroborative of the remarks made upon the Prospectus.

1.—*Alexander Matheson* left Stromness about the 19th of June 1813 on board the Prince of Wales, bound for Hudson's Bay, with a number of men, women, and children. They were well used during the passage. John Lawseere, overseer, died on board, which produced some difficulty. After arriving at Church-hill Factory, they were placed in tents, in which they remained five weeks. They were then obliged to build loghouses twelves miles from the Factory of Church-hill, because the clerks were afraid of sickness, and always kept the settlers some miles distant. In March they travelled from Church-hill to York Factory—the men drawing their provisions in hand-sleighs, 120*lbs.* at an average, and the women travelling in snow-shoes—sleeping in the snow, with a fire at their feet—hardly able to cut wood to make it —bleeding occasionally the young people to prevent them from

from snow-blinding. Before leaving Church-hill to go to York Factory, all were bled. They had abundance of spruce beer. They were stopped five miles from York Factory and placed in tents. In May they tried to proceed to the Red River. They had to tract the boats, each getting four pair of mogasines, which were cut walking upon the ice in one day; after this they they were forced to walk having their feet bare; the ice in large banks on each side of the river. Arrived at the Red River on the 27th of June. After remaining in tents seven days, land was pointed out to each family, who began to build.—Alexander Matheson further says, that at Church-hill they were threatened with irons if not submissive, their provisions stopped, and one of them struck with a stick.—Alexander Matheson says, that Lord Selkirk came round the country like a recruiting serjeant, saying, "The place is excellent, the most excellent except one;" meaning heaven.—Archibald Macdonnell read Alex. Matheson's letters. When any complained, they were insulted, and told there was new law. All along, the quantity of provision, a pound of oatmeal, and half a partridge, per day: at the settlement, one pound of pimican was given, per day.—Alexander Matheson, the day before he left the settlement, asked for his account of Archibald Macdonnell, which he promised; but said, the balance due was only L.9, though I expected L. 21. Next morning he said, that as two had a mind to go away, I might go, and he would keep what he had.—When they complained of illegal acts and unfair treatment, the agents said they might go and find law, there was none there.—In fine, not one article of the agreement was complied with.

(Signed) ALEXANDER MATHESON.

John Macpherson, parish of Kildonan, Gaylliable, deponeth or sayeth, That he had no contract with Earl Selkirk, but came out to look at the land, and to be joined the year following by his mother and six children, four lads and two girls. He was ordered to watch on board with the sailors. At the Straits, the doctor, or overseer, died: then Archibald Macdonnell became overseer. Proceeded to Churchhill Factory, where tents were pitched for every twelve, and a sick

a sick-tent for nine persons. Their clothes were left at Church-hill and York Factory, with many other things, which were promised to be sent up next year, but never came, and are still there.—He says the land cost from 5s. to 15s. per acre, according to its quality. John Macpherson says, he began to build; made some potatoe ground with hoes. When they got near the settlement, yet on Lake Winipie, Archibald Macdonnell said, they were now near to the settlement, but the Devil will get blind before you get out of it.—John Macpherson says, that Lord Selkirk promised his brother all things that a farmer would want. Some men were employed for months, but got no wages, the clerks and overseers promising to put it in their accounts,—but these accounts were never produced. Ten guineas, the passage for man, woman, and child. Archibald Macdonnell threatened to send those, in irons, to Church-hill, who refused to work on Sunday.

(Signed) JOHN MACPHERSON.

York, 1st October 1815.—*Andrew Macbeath* and *William Gunn* engaged with Lord Selkirk at Stromness, about the first of June 1813. His Lordship promised them 100 acres, or 300 acres, if they chose it, at one dollar if paid the first year, and if not paid, to pay the interest in wheat.—Farming utensils were promised: hoes were sold at 10s., axes at 15s.; thin small copper kettles at 30s. Brought out good clothing to Church-hill, where it was left, and never forwarded. Andrew Macbeath says, that in travelling from Church-hill to York Factory, in March 1814, he was thrice bled—twice just before setting out, and once on the way, to cure the cramp, and prevent blindness. They were badly fed at Church hill; half a partridge per day, and a pound, sometimes a pound and a half, of oatmeal: they got, at times, a little molasses, or bad pease half rotten. Archibald Macdonnell was harsh and unkind. They were encamped from twelve to fifteen miles from Church-hill, from which they had to drag their provisions in sleighs. Many severely frost-bit. They had to drag their provisions, and any little necessaries they could bring on sleighs, from

Church-hill

Church-hill to York Factory. Not prepared with cloathing proper for the climate. Were told by Lord Selkirk not to bring out money, as it was of no use in the country to which they were going; yet when they came to Church-hill, they could get nothing without money: a pound of tobacco, one dollar. Lord Selkirk had a store of goods, to be given out to settlers, as they were supposed to want them, but they never were told the price of any thing. At the Red River they were fed upon pimican and fish. Left York Factory in the end of May—about twenty days between York Factory and Red River. Ten guineas paid for every person, man, woman, and child—so that a man, with a wife, and two children, had to pay forty guineas. A number of them died at Church-hill. They had nothing but pimican, and some potatoes, and actually starving, were glad to get off. When they spoke of going away, they were told that it was easier to go to the moon than to get away; that the river would be guarded with cannon, that none might escape. They got muskets, and were told that the strongest gave the Law on the Red River, and that they had no business with the Law of Canada.

Andrew Macbeath particularly observes that he could not get clothing from the store for his infant child, although his wife and he had been obliged to leave their clothes and necessaries at Church-hill, under the promise of having them immediately sent after them, which was never done.

Alexander Matheson's agreement with Lord Selkirk.

It is contracted and agreed between the Right Honourable Thomas, Earl of Selkirk, on the one part, and Alexander Matheson, of the parish of Kildonan, and County of Sutherland, on the other part; that the said Alexander Matheson shall proceed, as soon as directed, to the establishment of the said Earl, near Hudson's Bay, and shall there serve the said Earl, diligently and faithfully, in the station appointed by him, from the date hereof, till the expiration

piration of one year after his arrival at the settlement. In consideration whereof, the said Earl binds and obliges himself to provide a sufficiency of wholesome food for the said Alexander Matheson, and, farther, to supply the said Alexander Matheson, at just and moderate prices, with such necessaries as he may, from time to time require, for his own use; and also to provide a conveyance by which the said Alexander Matheson must go to the Red River, free of expences, before or after the expiration of the said period of one year. And it is further agreed, that the said Earl may discharge the said Alexander Matheson from his service at any time before the expiration of the said period, and shall thereupon, cease to be liable for any further wages; but shall nevertheless, be bound to provide a conveyance, by which the said Alexander Matheson may go to the Red River; and it is also agreed, that the said Earl may assign, or make over the services of the said Alexander Matheson to any other person; and in case he shall make them over to the Hudson's Bay Company, the said Alexander Matheson shall be bound to serve the said Company for the remainder of his period, under all the articles usually stipulated in their contracts, of which a copy has been signed by the said Alexander Matheson, as relative hereto.

(Signed) SELKIRK.

ALEXANDER MATHESON.

Stromness, June 19th, 1813.

Alexander Matheson seems to have been indented as a servant, and not a settler. It is, however, very strange that the agreement contains no stipulation about sending him back to Scotland, should he dislike the country. There is no wages mentioned. It is evident that none of the families had the means of getting back from Red River, when once arrived there, and consequently were, in a manner, prisoners.

PROSPECTUS.

PROSPECTUS

FOR THE RED RIVER SETTLEMENT.

A track of land, consisting of some millions of acres, and, in point of soil and climate, inferior to none of equal extent in British America, is now to be disposed of; and will be sold extremely cheap on account of its situation, which is remote from the present settlements. If a track of the same extent and fertility were offered for sale in Lower Canada and Nova Scotia, purchasers would be eager to obtain it at an hundred or perhaps two hundred thousand guineas, and at that price would make an ample profit in the course of some years, by retailing it in small lots at an advanced price to actual settlers.

The lands in question, no ways different in advantages, may be purchased for about £10,000 sterling. The title has been submitted to lawyers of the first eminence in London, and is declared to be unexceptionable: but the situation is such, that the population of the older settlements cannot be expected, in the natural course of things, to spread into it for a long period of time; and till that takes place, the disadvantage of its remote situation must be an insuperable objection in the eyes of any unconnected individual, who is looking out for lands to establish his family.—Hence the prospect of finding settlers to purchase the land in small lots is remote, and on this account the proprietors are willing to part with it for so inconsiderable a price. But the obstacles which to an unconnected adventurer may be justly deemed insurmountable, may be overcome with care, by the combined efforts of many; and an adequate sum of money judiciously expended in removing the first difficulties of an infant settlement, may place the track of land in circumstances as advantageous to the proprietors as if it were in the immediate vicinity of populous colonies.

The expence, however, would be too great for an individual; and it is therefore proposed to form a joint stock company

pany, in two hundred shares of L. 100 each, so as to raise a sum of L. 20,000; of which a moiety to be employed in the purchase of the lands in question, the remainder in those expences which are necessary in bringing in settlers, and thereby rendering the land valuable.

To these settlers land will be disposed of, either in the way of sale, or lease in perpetuity, at the option of the settler, on terms very encouraging to him, and at the same time abundantly advantageous to the proprietors.

As there are serious objections against receiving into the proposed settlement any Americans, of the description of those who are likely to offer themselves, the settlers must be emigrants from Europe; and the most feasible plan seems to be, that they should be selected from those parts of the United Kingdom which are most overburdened with inhabitants, viz. the Highlands of Scotland, and some parts of Ireland. A small number of the emigrants who now go from these districts to the United States of America, would be more than sufficient for the object in view.—Such a change of their destination could injure no part of the Kingdom, and would save to the Empire subjects, who would otherwise be entirely lost to their country. To facilitate an object thus equally advantageous to the public and to the parties concerned, it is proposed, that a preference should be allowed to the subscribers who are personally connected with these districts of the kingdom, and whose local influence may be of service in promoting the desired change in the destination of those who are determined to emigrate.

The settlement is to be formed in a territory where religion is not the ground of any civil disqualification: an unreserved participation in every privilege will therefore be enjoyed by the protestant and catholic, without distinction. And it is proposed, that in every parochial division an allotment of land shall be made, for the perpetual support of a clergyman of that persuasion which the majority of the inhabitants adhere to.

As the lands in question possess important natural advantages over any which now remain unoccupied in Nova Scotia

Scotia and the adjacent colonies, it cannot be deemed unreasonable, if the settlers in general, are charged for their lands at the lowest rate, which they would pay in these provinces. On the other hand, they will naturally expect to be conveyed to their lands without incurring more expence than if they were to settle in these maritime colonies The managers of the concern must therefore undertake to provide conveyance, at moderate rates, for the emigrants who go out under their patronage. The rate of passage money paid on board other ships bound to America, may be taken as the criterion. These rates being always proportioned to the prices of freight and shipping at the time, no material loss can be apprehended upon the sea voyage.

But as the place of settlement is at a considerable distance from the sea, an extra expence must be incurred for the inland conveyance, which the emigrants cannot be expected to pay, if they are to be charged for land at the rate of the maritime colonies. The expence which will thus fall upon the proprietors may be estimated about L. 10 for each family of settlers, at an average. This, however, will be amply reimbursed on the price of their land.

The lowest price of land in the maritime colonies, when sold to actual settlers, and possessing any tolerable advantages of situation, is at the rate of 10s per acre, if sold; or if leased for a perpetuity, 1s per annum. Every family of settlers may be expected to take up at least 100 acres, if they are allowed some accommodation for the payment: and 100 acres, at the above rate, will amount to L. 50, leaving a net advantage of L 40, after reimbursing the charge of bringing in the settler. If he should prefer leasing, his rent will in two years repay the charges, and will remain afterwards as a clear income to the proprietors.

As the inland situation of the settlement will preclude the settler from some of the sources of profit which are enjoyed in maritime situations, it becomes necessary to provide substitutes. The cultivation of hemp is peculiarly calculated for inland situations, as that article is so valuable in proportion to its weight, that it can bear the expence of a considerable inland navigation. This cultivation is also a

favourite

favourite national object, and the settlement will derive benefit from the public encouragement which is held out for promoting it.—A still more beneficial object of attention, is the growth of fine wool, an article so valuable, that it could bear any expence of inland conveyance, and one for which the country is peculiarly adapted. In the vicinity of the proposed settlement there are immense open plains without wood, fine dry grass land, much of it capable for immediate cultivation, and all well fitted for pasturage, particularly for sheep. This is an advantage which no other part of British America possesses by nature, and to which the colonists of the maritime provinces cannot attain, without the laborious and expensive operation of clearing. If to this advantage the proprietors add that of a good breed of Spanish Merino Sheep, the settlers can never meet with any difficulty in paying the price or rent of their lands. The fleeces of ten or twelve sheep will pay the rent of 100 acres, and with the produce of a very small flock, the price of a lot of land may be paid off in three or four years.

With such advantages the settlers must thrive rapidly, and it will soon become apparent to them that the land is worth a much higher price.—At first, however, it cannot be supposed that the common emigrants will understand or become capable of appreciating these advantages. On the contrary, it is to be expected that they will be diffident, and afraid of venturing to a new and (to them) an unknown country. It will, therefore, be necessary to give some extraordinary encouragement to a few of the first who enter into the plan.

From this, and other causes, the commencement of the undertaking must be subject to expences, which will not continue permanently when the settlement is well established: but it is only by means of this first outlay that we can expect to attain the ultimate advantage which is to accrue to the proprietors. There is no room to believe that these expences will exceed the sum which is proposed to be raised; but it must be some time before the settlers can be numerous enough to pay much, either of rent or purchase-money. Ten or twelve years, therefore, must elapse, before the profits of the undertaking can be sufficient to afford a dividend to the

proprietors.

proprietors. After that period, the return may be expected to increase rapidly, and will soon form an ample indemnification to the subscribers, for the loss of interest on their money in the meantime. The amount to which the profits may arise, seems almost to baffle imagination: upon any principle of calculation which can reasonably be adopted, the result comes out so extraordinarily great, that it might appear like exaggeration to state it. But the difference between buying land at 1d. or 2d. per acre, and selling it at 8s. or 10s. is very palpable, and does not seem to require much comment. The speculation may not suit those who require an immediate income; but for any one who is desirous of providing beforehand for a young family, such an opportunity seldom occurs.

W. Gray, Printer, *Montreal.*